

CLAIMS

5 1. ^{sub 1} A coin counting machine, comprising:
a coin discriminator sensor;
a coin hopper having a container for receiving a
plurality of coins, and a feed for feeding the coins in the
container to the coin discriminator sensor;
10 a controller for calculating a monetary value of said
coins responsive to said coin discriminator sensor; and
a transport device for transporting the coins from a
user to the container at a controlled flow rate, said flow rate
being a function of a quantity of coins in the container.

15 2. ~~The coin counting machine of claim 1 wherein the
controller causes the container to dispense debris therefrom
after all the coins have been extracted from the container by the
feed.~~

20 3. ^{sub 2} The coin counter of claim 2 wherein said feed comprises
a moveable backplate bias toward the container and a circular
disc rotatably mounted to the moveable backplate, and said
controller causes the container to dispense the debris by moving
25 the moveable backplate away from the container.

4. ~~The coin counting machine of claim 1 wherein said
transport device comprises a conveyer belt.~~

30 5. The coin counting machine of claim 4 further comprising
a level sensor for detecting the quantity of coins in the
container, said flow rate of the conveyer belt being responsive
to the level sensor.

6. The counting coin machine of claim 5 wherein the
conveyer belt transports the coins to the container at a fixed
5 flow rate if the level sensor detects that the quantity of coins
in the container is below a threshold quantity, and the conveyer
belt is stopped if the quantity of coins in the container exceeds
said threshold quantity.

10 7. The coin counting machine of claim 6 wherein said
threshold quantity is determined by the level of the coins in the
container.

15 8. The coin counting machine of claim 1 further comprising
a coin input tray for receiving said coins from the user and
~~coupling said received coins to the transport device.~~

20 9. ^{sub}_{a3} The coin machine of claim 8 wherein said coin input
tray is adapted to couple coins to the transport device by
lifting one end of the input tray, and further comprising a lock
down mechanism to selectively prohibit the lifting of said one
end of the input tray.

25 10. A coin counter for a coin machine, comprising:
a coin discriminator sensor;
a coin hopper having a container for receiving a
plurality of coins, and a feed for feeding the coins in the
container to the coin discriminator sensor; and
30 a controller for calculating a monetary value of said
coins responsive to said coin discriminator sensor, said
controller causing the container to dispense debris therefrom
after all the coins have been extracted from the container by the
feed.

5 11. The coin counter of claim 9 wherein said feed comprises a moveable backplate bias toward the container and a circular disc rotatably mounted to said moveable backplate, and said controller causes the container to dispense the debris by moving the moveable backplate away from the container.

10 12. The coin counter of claim 10 further comprising a coin rail for coupling the coins from the feed to the coin discriminator sensor, said feed feeding the coins onto the coin rail one coin at a time.

15 13. The coin counter of claim 12 wherein said controller determines the authenticity of each of the coins responsive to the coin discrimination sensor, and the monetary value calculated based only on the coins determined to be authentic.

20 14. The coin counter of claim 13 further comprising a solenoid mounted to the coin rail for removing the coins determined to be non-authentic by the controller from the coin rail.

25 *sub* 15. A multi-transactional coin machine, comprising:
a coin counting module for counting a plurality of coins, and calculating a monetary value therefor;
a user interface for selecting one of a plurality of transactions; and
a controller for generating instructions for a remote
30 terminal, said instructions comprising a command to apply the calculated monetary value of the coins to the selected one of the transactions.

35 16. The multi-transactional coin machine of claim 15 further comprising a coin input tray for receiving said coins

from the user, and coupling said received coins to the coin counting module.

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17. The multi-transactional coin machine of claim 16 further comprising a non-coin acceptor for receiving non-coins from said user, and wherein said coin counting module calculates a monetary value for said non-coins and said instruction
10 comprises a command to apply a sum of said calculated monetary value of the coins and said calculated monetary value of the non-coins to the selected one of said transactions.

18. The multi-transactional coin machine of claim 17
15 wherein said non-coin acceptor comprises a currency acceptor.

19. The multi-transactional coin machine of claim 17 wherein said non-coin acceptor comprises a card reader.

20. A method for performing transactions with a remote service provider from a coin machine, comprising the steps of:

receiving, at the coin machine, a plurality of coins from a user;

discriminating denominations of said coins;

25 calculating a monetary value of said coins as a function of said discriminated denominations;

selecting, at the coin machine, one of a plurality of transactions;

generating instructions for said remote service provider, said instructions comprising a command to apply said
30 calculated monetary value of the coins to the selected one of the transactions;

transmitting said instructions to a said service provider; and

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~~consummating said selected transaction at the service provider.~~

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21. The method of claim 20 wherein the transmitting step comprises transmitting said instructions to a host terminal, formatting said instructions at said host terminal according to a protocol, and transmitting said formatted instructions to said service provider.

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22. The method of claim 21 wherein the transmitting step further comprises determining, at the host terminal, the service provider for the selected transaction from a plurality of service providers from said instructions.

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